MICHIGAN'S GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM: NEW EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

> ✓ ***Great Start Readiness Program showed significant impact on increasing at-risk preschool children's early literacy and math skills.[1]***

A rigorous evaluation using <u>Regression Discontinuity Design</u>[2] showed that children who participated in GSRP scored significantly higher on <u>early literacy and math</u> assessments than children in the comparison group.

> ✓ ***Great Start Readiness Program reduced the achievement gap in early literacy between higher and lower risk preschool children.[3]***

Children who were identified as having **higher risks scored lower at program entry and gained more in early literacy scores** (i.e., in relative standings in comparison to national standards) than children who had lower risk. [4]

Preliminary data[5] show children with **higher risks scored lower at program entry and gained more in early math skills**, as well. In the context of the growing body of research indicating math is a strong predictor for later school success[6], the GSRP results for math are especially promising.

Figure 1: GSRP Reduces Achievement Gaps in Early Literacy for Higher Risk Children[7]
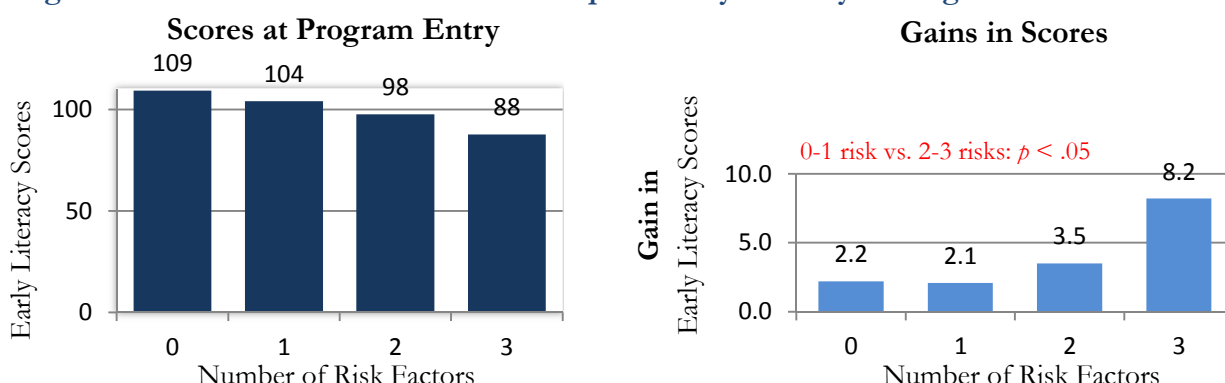
[1] Xiang, Z. & Wakabayashi, T. (October, 2014). *Michigan Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation: Lansing School District 2011-2014—Group Equivalency Enhanced Regression Discontinuity Design.* Unpublished report submitted to Michigan Department of Education.

[2] Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) is considered equal in rigor to Randomized Control Trial (RCT) designs in terms of recreating experimental results and allowing causal inferences. RDD will allow the evaluators to make causal claims about differences in outcomes examined between the treatment group of children (already having experienced GSRP the previous school year) and the non-treatment group (children just entering GSRP). Additionally, it will allow the evaluation to control for critical factors which are hard to control using other designs such as intrinsic parental motivation.

[3] Wakabayashi, T., Xiang, Z., & Mann, E. (October, 2012). *Michigan Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation: Lansing School District 2011-2012*. Unpublished report submitted to the MDE. Wakabayashi, T..& Xiang, Z. (October, 2013). *Michigan Great Start Readiness Program Evaluation: Lansing School District 2012-2013*. Unpublished report submitted to MDE.

[4] We defined risks based on the three characteristics that strongly related to low child outcomes at program entry--extremely low income, parents' low educational attainment, and ethnic or racial minority.

[5] Data from Lansing GSRP Cohort 2011-2012.

[6] The Education Commission of the States (October 2013). *Math in the Early Years: A Strong Predictor for Later School Success.* www.ecs.org; Duncan, G.J., Dowsett, C.J., Claessens, A., Magnuson, K., Huston, A.C., Klebanov, P., & Japel, C. (2007). School Readiness and Later Achievement. *Developmental Psychology, 43,* 1428-1446.

[7] Data from Lansing GSRP Cohort 2012-2013.